

2015



1st Infantry Division Active Component Soldier works with African role player during the field-training portion of Dagger University, at Fort Riley, Kansas.



Tennessee National Guard Soldiers train Ghana Army Engineers in the State Partnership Program.



The US Army Reserve Capstone Concept stresses engagement and training opportunities through regional alignment with

GET RID OF THE GUARD AND ARMY RESERVE OR USE THEM

Suggested steps forward to truly integrate the Active Army, Guard, and Army Reserve into one ARMY to optimize readiness and enhance National Security

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A scene in the 2007 film, “300”, recalls the story of the brave 300 Spartan warriors of Ancient Greece, raised from birth to fight for the glory of their City State, who set out with their King Leonidas to stop the invading armies of the Persian “god-king” Xerxes at Thermopylae. Nearing Thermopylae, the 300 are joined by several thousand hoplite warriors from the City State of Thebes, a Spartan ally. The Theban King, Daxos, upon observing the small band of Spartans, confronts Leonidas and demands, “Where is your Spartan Army? You bring only this handful of soldiers against Xerxes? I see I was wrong to expect Sparta's commitment to at least match our Theban own.” Leonidas haughtily replies, “Doesn’t it? You say, I haven’t brought an army?” He then proceeds to question several of Daxos’ Theban “citizen soldiers,” who, true to the long-standing Greek hoplite custom of the 4th and 5th centuries BC, donned armor and took up their thrusting spears only in times of war. “You, there. What is your profession?” Came the reply, “I’m a potter, sir.” Continuing his questioning, “And you, Arcadian. What is your profession?” “Sculptor, sir.” “And you?” The Theban answered, “Blacksmith.” Leonidas then turns to his 300, who had spent their entire adult lives as soldiers, “Spartans! What is your profession?” In one voice, not unlike the US Army’s rallying cry, “Hooah,” these 300 shouted out, “Warriors, Sir. Warriors.” Satisfied, Leonidas answers his anxious ally, “Then, I have brought more soldiers than you did.”¹

The Questions that Demand Answers

Though fictional, the exchange between Leonidas and Daxos characterizes some of the most important policy questions facing the U.S. Army, as Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Army’s civilian and military leadership decide how to allocate personnel, units, equipment, and training dollars across the Active, Guard, and Reserve Components and what to pay for this war fighting capability. Are Guard and Reserve Soldiers and the units in which they serve as good as Active Component units? Are Reserve units operationally capable and ready to mobilize, deploy, and successfully execute missions that are reflective of the current and projected security environment whether at home or abroad within the abbreviated response times anticipated for future conflicts? Is this Nation willing to pay the price for a required level of readiness and competency within the Reserve Components when it is hard pressed to man, equip, and train the Active Component Army? Have the Reserve Components been fully integrated into the Total Force and employed to the best advantage of the Army and the taxpayer?

Even after almost 13 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan in which Army Guard and Reserve units fought side by side with their Active Component counterparts, a vast divide remains between the Components that can only be closed through continuous and predictable use of the Reserve

Components, common training, and reformed personnel policies.

In search of answers, the recently enacted 2015 National Defense Authorization Act has created the “National Commission on the Future of the US Army”.

The Total Force Army Policy

Since 1973, the Army has operated under a “Total Force Policy” that calls for the closest integration of the Active and Reserve Components. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird first articulated the term and its policy implications as the Army rebuilt after Vietnam. President Johnson chose to fight the seven-year war in Vietnam using an Active Army force of almost 8,000,000 draftees and a much smaller number of volunteer enlistees, led by a cadre of career Soldiers. Most of these young men received their draft notices, spent an average of four to five months in basic and advanced military training in Active Army training camps, and then shipped off to Vietnam. Except for what amounted to a handful of specialized units, Johnson declined for political reasons to mobilize Guard and Reserve units, a good number of whose Soldiers were combat veterans of World War II or Korea, or both. As a consequence, Reserve Component units became “safe havens” for men seeking to satisfy their military obligation under the Conscription Law without facing the threat of deployment to Southeast Asia. This policy did nothing to burnish the

professional military reputation of these Components.

The error of that political decision was recognized shortly after the end of active hostilities in Vietnam when the new Army Chief of Staff and former Commander of US Forces in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, declared, “The Army will never again go to war without the Reserve Components.”² At the same time, President Nixon abolished the draft that had reliably provided young men to fill the Army’s ranks as it fought the war in Southeast Asia. With the abolishment of conscription, Reserve and Guard Soldiers would now have to be drawn into the Nation’s conflicts with the Active Army as a “Total Force.” Secretary of Defense Laird committed to implement General Abrams’ “Total Army” or “Total Force” policy as a pillar of this Nation’s Defense Strategy.³

Total Force Policy Historical Record

The Army spent 30 fitful years after Vietnam determining the extent to which it would and could implement the Total Force Policy, alternatively denigrating the capabilities of Reserve units and then trying to figure out how to enhance the operational readiness of these units through various strategies and more money for equipment and training.

Notwithstanding these vaunted efforts, most reservists continued to train with “cascaded” hand-me-down equipment

from the Active Component with their own mission essential equipment on hand rarely exceeding 70 percent of the unit's authorization. The ability of Reserve Component units to efficiently mobilize in support of contingency operations remained questionable.⁴

The call-up of reservists for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 1990 to 1991, held the previous 17-year old training strategy of the Reserve Components up to intense scrutiny. President George H.W. Bush exercised his statutory authority to identify for mobilization almost one million reservists, of whom 228,500 Guard members and reservists actually mobilized and approximately 97,484 served on active duty in the Persian Gulf in combat, combat support, and combat service support units. Army leaders pointed to the commendable service of two Reserve field artillery brigades, the 142nd from Arkansas and the 196th from Tennessee, as validating the "Total Army Policy" of the previous decade.

However, for the most part, RC units arrived at the active Army mobilization (MOB) stations at less than represented levels of "operational readiness," despite all the resources the Army had expended for pre-mobilization training.⁵ Units mobilized with less than their required personnel strength and equipment. Many soldiers who did report were either too old, out of shape, or had not completed their individual military occupational specialty (MOS) training. Substantial numbers suffered from medical and

dental problems that could not be timely rectified at the mobilization stations, making these soldiers nondeployable. For most units, time spent at the mobilization stations consisted of records reviews, medical check-ups, equipment outfitting, and one or two opportunities to fire individual and crew-served weapons. Sixty-seven percent of all Army Guard and Reserve units deployed within 45 days of mobilizing; 28 percent deployed within 20 days.

Generally, deployed RC combat support and combat service support units performed acceptably in theater after acclimation and substantial additional training in Saudi Arabia. However, RC combat units, including the "Round-Out/Round-Up" brigades, did not fare so well. These brigades had received the largess of training and logistics support over the last decade under the "Total Army Policy" initiatives. A case in point was the 48th Infantry Brigade of the Georgia National Guard, which reported to Fort Irwin, California upon mobilization. After six months of post-mobilization training, the Active Army refused to deploy the brigade to Desert Storm, declaring the unit incapable of combat operations. Then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney declared that even after six months of post-mobilization training, these units were incapable of combat operations. "I feel strongly we would have run the risk of getting a lot of people killed unnecessarily if we sent these units (to the Gulf) before they were ready."⁶ The Guard leadership and several members of Congress countered

that the units were more than ready, but the Active Army did not want to deploy Guard combat teams to Desert Storm because it would have validated the cost savings associated with maintaining more combat structure in the National Guard.

Following the Gulf War and the enactment by Congress of the Army National Guard Readiness Reform Act (ANGCRRA) of 1992, the Army sought to repair the perceived operational, personnel, and equipping deficiencies of the Reserve Components.⁷ It implemented the “Bold Shift” initiative, in which certain key Reserve Component units, identified as early deployers in Combatant Commanders’ Operations Plans for overseas contingencies, were more amply resourced with equipment, personnel, and training dollars than lower priority (lower tiered) units. The expectation was that those units which received the largesse of personnel, equipment, and training opportunities would be prepared to accomplish their contingency missions within a week to no more than four weeks after receipt of mobilization orders.

In addition, the training resources across the Active Army, Guard, and Army Reserve, to include at one point almost 7,000 Active Duty trainers, were reorganized and consolidated under First Army and Fifth Army Commands within the Army’s “Training Support XXI” program and directed to support Reserve Component training.⁸

Guard and Reserve Integration – Last Thirteen Years of War

A little over a decade later, the Department of Defense again called hundreds of thousands of Guard and Reserve Soldiers to Active Duty for service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The seemingly unending nature and the security, logistics, and reconstruction efforts demanded by these conflicts imposed unexpectedly huge demands for personnel on an Active Army Force which had shrunk from a high of 732,000 at the commencement of the First Iraq War of 1990 to 490,000 at the time of the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001. The Army had no choice but to call-up its Reserve Components for both combat and support operations. The Active Army had simply run out of people and force structure.

At the outset of combat action in Afghanistan, the majority of Reserve Component Soldiers that mobilized and deployed were members of support units, the direct consequence of Secretary Laird and General Abrams’ decisions in the early 1970’s to put almost 50 percent of support and combat enabler units in the Guard and Reserve. These early deploying units and their Soldiers received limited post-mobilization training, sometimes less than two weeks. But, from the fall of 2001 through the first months of the Iraq campaign, hardly anyone within the senior ranks of the Administration nor the Department of Defense expected that these conflicts would endure for almost

half a generation and require the Army, the Marines, and the other services, to a lesser degree, to conduct long term counterinsurgency, stability, and nation-building operations.⁹ There was also a concurrent assumption that these mobilized Reserve units were already trained and ready as a result of innumerable unit drills, summer training camps, and Army equipping initiatives long before the commencement of combat operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

But as Guard and Reserve losses mounted and the conflicts continued, seemingly interminably, Reserve Component units, except for some highly specialized Reserve Soldiers and units, reported to mobilization training centers for anywhere from a month to often as much as six months training before they deployed overseas. There, they relearned, if they needed relearning at all, basic Soldier skills, marksmanship, Iraqi and Afghan culture, their unit collective mission, and what it meant to be a Soldier under the supervision of Active Duty Soldiers. In essence, the “going in” assumption by the Active Component leaders responsible for validating these units for overseas deployment was that these part time warriors needed “regreening”, retraining, and often the resolution or repair of sometimes significant medical and dental problems that had not been addressed by their Reserve Component Commands in peacetime. Otherwise, these Soldiers would be a threat to themselves and incapable of

immediately executing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan to an Active Component standard.

The Department of Defense and Army military and civilian leaders cannot be faulted for taking special care of these “Citizen Soldiers” before deployment and directing such extensive post-mobilization training. There is always huge value in repetitively practicing basic combat skills and rehearsing the mission critical collective tasks these units and their Soldiers would be required to perform once overseas.

But in hindsight, committing Guard and Reserve units for up to six months of training in stateside mobilization training centers amounted to significant consumption of time in which these units were not available for deployment and a huge expenditure of money to support this Reserve Component post-mobilization training regime. The fact that almost every one of these mobilizing Reserve and Guard Soldiers had to participate in this extended post-mobilization training amounted to a tacit indictment of the quality and effectiveness of the training in both individual skills and mission tasks that these Soldiers had presumptively received over the course of their careers in these organizations – at least one weekend a month and a minimum of two weeks of Active Duty training every single year. It raised the question whether the Army got a reasonable return on its investment of billions of dollars spent for such peacetime pre-

mobilization training over the years leading up to the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts.

In addition, the Active Army had committed thousands of Active Duty trainers as mandated by Title XI of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 1993 and subsequent legislation to these Reserve Component formations over the years since the “Total Force Policy” was adopted to train Reserve Component units and validate them as “operationally ready” and capable of mobilizing and deploying within 30 days or less as part of the Total Force.

Over time, successive First Army Commanders from the Active Army, who were responsible, over all, for this post-mobilization training of the Guard and Army Reserve, eliminated a lot of redundant training and administrative actions at the mobilization training centers. They cancelled most pre-deployment ceremonies and reduced unproductive downtime. The Department of Defense allocated additional contingency funds to the Guard and Army Reserve to provide medical and dental care for these Soldiers before they arrived at the mobilization training centers.

If the training strategies of the 1970’s, 80’s, and 90’s had worked, however, Reserve Component units should have been able to assemble at their Armories and Reserve Centers, pack their equipment, report to a deployment site run by either the Guard or the Reserve

leadership, and push out to Iraq and Afghanistan in a matter of days without the necessity of undergoing multiple months of post-mobilization training at Active Army-run centers. Guard and Reserve senior leadership would certify these units for deployment and not Active Duty Colonels commanding Training Brigades at the mobilization training centers. When a two-star Guard Adjutant General responsible to his or her governor for the well being and anticipated operational success of his or her State Guard unit or, for that matter, the three-star commander of the United States Army Reserve can’t certify his units, when every other two-star division commander in the Active Army can do so, raises the issue of trust on the part of the Active Component of the Reserve Components’ senior military leaders.

Objective Indices of Operational Performance Lacking

These Guard and Reserve units went on to perform their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, probably no better nor any worse than their Active Component counterparts. I say “probably” because while laudatory comments of Guard and Reserve performance overseas abounded in the local and national press and in the public statements of senior Army leadership there has not been one scientifically grounded study assessing the operational performances of these Reserve Component units while in Iraq or Afghanistan and correlating the objective indices of such performances against the type and length of training

that these units received both before mobilization and at the post-mobilization training centers. The Department of Defense's Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation touched upon Reserve Component readiness for overseas engagements in his 2013 Report to Congress. The Report concluded, without reference to any data, "If a mission requires perishable, collective, or specifically military skills, the Active Component is more responsive, whereas if a mission requires individual skills that can be maintained in dwell in both Active Component and Reserve Component units, either component could respond [to contingencies]."¹⁰

If Presidential Unit Citations and Meritorious Unit Commendations, as recorded by the Army's Center for Military History, represent any sort of recognition of unit operational competence, National Guard and Reserve units received a bountiful number of these awards for service overseas during the last 13 years. However, the absence of any objectively based assessments of Reserve Component operational capability and performance while deployed, allowed and continues to permit senior civilian and uniformed Army leadership to make anecdotal comments about Reserve unit performances, especially combat units, which then become the subjective bases for decisions about the future employment and resourcing of these units.

The official histories of the Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom cite the magnificent contributions of the Guard's combat brigades in counterinsurgency operations early in the histories of these conflicts. As time passed, almost all Guard combat formations saw service, instead, as security forces protecting people and property, including escorting supply convoys up and down some of the most dangerous highways in the world, or as trainers. These Reserve Component units readily accepted their assigned and important missions with enthusiasm and performed bravely. However, higher end combat tasks, such as clearing insurgents from their bases of operation, especially during the Iraq and Afghan "Surges", were almost always performed by Active Component forces. At the same time, while Army Reserve units smartly executed their combat sustainment missions overseas, the leadership role of USAR logistical command and control units, such as the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, which early in the war served as the senior Army logistical headquarters in both Iraq and Afghanistan, was curtailed and its responsibilities transferred to the Active Component.

Further complicating matters, some Guard and Army Reserve leaders lost "points" with the Active Army by continuously reminding the Army that their "overtasked" units should receive at least a year or longer pre-notification of mobilization and that unit deployment periods must be rigidly enforced, so that

Citizen Soldiers could return home and resume their lives as soon as possible after their one year of Active Duty service. In effect, they made “access” to these units and their use by the Active Army more difficult.

It did not help that Army Reserve Soldiers alongside their Active Component counterparts had perpetrated some of the more egregious abuses of Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison in 2003. Then, there were the almost weekly expositions authored by an eager media, often opposed to the war effort, which focused on a handful of vocal Guard and Reserve Soldiers who vigorously complained that they had either received inadequate training before deployment, did not get the most up-to-date equipment and protective body armor until long after they were overseas, or they did not get the Army to acknowledge their pre- and post-deployment medical and mental health issues.¹¹ State Governors would quickly intervene, and appropriately so, if they perceived that Reserve Component Soldiers were mistreated or denied what Active Component Soldiers received, causing considerable political problems for the Army.¹² This recitation should not in any way denigrate the competence and sacrifices of so many Guard and Reserve Soldiers who spent 12 months or longer on Active Duty and deployed two, three, or even four times over the course of this long war. Right or wrong, however, these issues eventually caused senior Army leadership to turn to Active

Component units, rather than Reserve Component units, for overseas deployment, if such units were available. Active Component units generated less “drama.”

Are Fair Conclusions Being Drawn Today?

Is the key take away, therefore, from these 13 years of conflict and continued employment of the Guard and Reserve that as Colonel (Retired) Robert Killibrew, wrote in 2013, “The reserve components rose brilliantly to the challenges of the past decade...anyone remotely familiar with the reserve components of the land forces—principally the Army—realizes that component reserve units cannot be called up and deployed without sustained and sometimes lengthy pre-training here in the U.S.”¹³ As further suggested by Major General John Rossi, the then director of the Army’s Quadrennial Defense Review Panel, in an interview with the blog, Breaking Defense, in March 2014, “It is by no means impossible to train a Guard brigade to the same standard as an active-duty one; it just takes time – time the Army may not have in a future crisis.”¹⁴

On the other hand are comments by Active Component officers objectively unsupportable, even biased, the result of parochial thinking about the role of the Guard and Army Reserve? To put it another way, was the extensive post-mobilization training which almost every Guard and Reserve unit underwent,

required because the Active Component leadership did not trust senior National Guard and Army Reserve leadership to fulfill their duty under law to deliver trained and ready units to the Active Army when called upon to do so?¹⁵ Or, were these units, in the majority, truly incapable of deployment without extensive post-mobilization training, whether because these units were actually deficient in their collective skills, especially combined arms maneuver, or that they lacked the people and equipment to perform their assigned missions without additional time to garner and train these resources? Or, did all these Reserve units undergo such extensive training, because in these long duration conflicts, there was no real demand for rapid deployment of these units to Iraq or Afghanistan?

The result of this strategic malaise is now bitter debate about how much capability should be retained in the Active Army, and how much should be relegated to the National Guard and the Army Reserve.”¹⁶ This “bitter debate” has become strident and politically supercharged over topics ranging from force structure allocations between the Active and Reserve Components, personnel reductions, and the apportionment of weapon systems such as the AH-64 Apache, waged by retired flag officers, governors, congressional representatives, the National Guard of the United States Association, the Reserve Officer Association, security consultants and think tanks.

No Present Clear Strategy for the Employment and Resourcing of the Reserve Components

Distressingly, the Army has no strategy for the employment of the Guard and Reserve – that is an articulated outline of what level of readiness our Guard and Reserve units must maintain, in what types of future operations and conflicts will these units be committed, and how best to integrate the Reserve Soldiers and Guard Soldiers, when under federal control, into the vast personnel, logistics, facilities management, and information technology organizations that constitute today’s Army.

While not a strategy, the Army’s recently published, “Army Operating Concept,” (AOC) describes how future Army forces will prevent conflict, shape security environments, and win wars. The AOC guides future force development by identifying first order capabilities that the Army needs to support U.S. policy objectives. The few references to the Reserve Components are statements such as: “Army Reserve and Army National Guard units (through such efforts as the State Partnership Program) sustain long-term relationships and shape the security environment, by applying their unique civil-military expertise across military, government, economic, and social spheres.... The Army (Active Component, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard) fills critical first responder capacity shortfalls to save lives, relieve suffering, protect

property, and repair critical infrastructure.” There is no suggestion that the Reserve Components will actively deter aggression side by side with their Active Duty counterparts and win our Nation’s wars.¹⁷

Similarly, the Congressionally directed and recently published 2014 National Defense Panel Report, “Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future,” makes no mention of the Reserve Components as integral to our Nation’s security and military responsiveness.¹⁸

As the Armed Forces of the United States have “ostensibly” forsworn engagement in “prolonged stability operations” as detailed in the Presidentially endorsed 2012 national security statement, “Sustain US Global Leadership – Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” there appears to be little need for most National Guard combat formations to execute the very security missions that characterized their engagement during this last decade of war, except with respect to their responsibilities for homeland defense, state disaster relief, and local law enforcement missions.¹⁹ If the Army Operating Concept is adopted and implemented, then Army personnel, equipping, and training strategies should correspondingly reflect these newly articulated missions for both the Guard and Reserve. Homeland defense and state missions do not require high-end M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks and AH-64D Long Bow attack helicopters for Guard Brigades or upgraded Joint

Tactical Land Vehicles for the Army Reserve. Instead, Reserve Component equipping budgets should be spent for utility helicopters, decontamination kits, bulldozers, and riot gear.

Unanswered Questions and Some Proposals

Such questions about how best to use the Guard and Reserve and optimize their operational readiness must be answered. The present muddled and ill-defined relationship between the Components comes at great expense to the Defense budget and poses major risk to our National Security. There is no agreed strategy for the employment and resourcing of the Guard and the Reserve that addresses current and future conflicts and the individual and collective capabilities required of these Soldiers and their units to prevail in such conflicts. Whether Congress, the States, the Department of Defense and the Army leadership are willing to expend the political capital to develop, articulate, and then execute such a strategy that calls for the total integration of the Reserve Components with the Active Component to include the commitment of the Guard and Army Reserve to near immediate engagement in combat operations or overseas contingencies, is an open question. In the alternative, the strategy, after bitter debate, could direct the habitual assignment of the Guard and a good portion of the Army Reserve, firstly, to Homeland Defense, and to major combat operations overseas, only after extended

periods of post-mobilization training, as was the case over the last thirteen years. With an interest in advocating the strategy of a truly operational and relevant Reserve Component for both overseas and domestic contingencies, I suggest the following:

1. Guard and Reserve units must be totally integrated into the command and control and training cycles of the Active Component. As a matter of routine and not as an exception, Active units must train with Reserve Component counterparts. The Round Out/Round Up Brigades of the late 80's were an example of the earlier implementation of this initiative, where select Guard Brigades constituted the third maneuver brigades of several Army Divisions. The initiative failed because the Active Army after Desert Storm, based upon its own observations of the performances of several mobilized Guard brigades at the National Training Center, made a conscientious decision to reduce the combat role of reservists.²⁰ As a first order of business, the Army should adequately resource the new "Bold Shift" initiative, driven by First Army's Lieutenant General Michael Tucker, which again puts Active Duty trainers back in the pre-mobilization training of Guard and Reserve Units.

2. The initiatives of the past – "Bold Shift 1993" and the "Affiliation/Capstone/War Trace Programs" did not go far enough toward driving Active and Reserve Components integration because these initiatives were

consistently underfunded and no penalties attached to the leadership at all levels of the Army, from the Active Component Company First Sergeant, to the Guard brigade commander, to the Army Staff for failing to meet the stated goal of achieving an integrated "Total Force." The Army's Force Generation Model, when first articulated in 2007 by General Charles C. Campbell of Forces Command, suggested a powerful way to increase the importance of the Reserve Components to national military security and to integrate them with the Active Army, but the proposal to continuously and predictably use mobilized Reserve and Guard units, even after Iraq and Afghanistan, was quietly withdrawn in the face of present budget challenges.²¹ Under the original proposal, Reserve Component units would expect to spend up to a year every five years on Active Duty within Active Duty formations, training and doing the exact same jobs as the Active units they would replace, whether providing border security in Korea, serving as part of the NATO contingency force, or honing collective combat or combat enabler skills at the multiple Active Component training venues where Active units would also train. Unquestionably, there would be significant, but yet uncalculated costs associated with mobilization and full time engagement of Reserve Units once every five years. However, if force structures across both the Active and Reserve Components would, as a consequence, be adjusted to reflect the consistent and predictable incorporation

of these mobilized units as the immediate “go to” resources for the Army and the Combatant Commanders, there will be measurable cost savings to the Army.

Even without force structure cost savings, there is huge value related to this initiative. It makes Reserve Component units operationally relevant and their training and resourcing of vital importance to the Department of the Army. It would force Reserve Component units to train to mission requirements and come as close as possible to the expected level of personnel readiness demanded of these units and Soldiers in the four years proceeding mobilization. It justifies the expenditure of funds for outfitting these units with the most modern equipment that will serve the national interest because the equipment will be used in that fifth year of mobilization, rather than congesting National Guard and Reserve equipment concentration and storage sites, taken out only for annual training.

No one knows whether, if this initiative was implemented, “Citizen Soldiers” would leave in droves because they would find themselves, away from family and their civilian careers, every five years, mobilized on extended Active Duty tours. But, if the lessons of the last decade have any value at all, it is that the Reserve Components responded to repeated mobilizations and deployments and yet maintained their authorized strength and recruiting bases. The

greatest number of “Citizen Soldiers” who answered the call to duty after 9/11 wanted to serve, and confirmed that commitment by unhesitatingly deploying overseas and, for the most part, stoically accepting the consequences of deployment upon their families and their civilian careers.

3. The term, “tiered readiness,” first specifically used in conjunction with the “Bold Shift” initiative of the 90’s, but employed in actual practice since the beginning of organized military forces, describes the differential allocation of personnel, equipment, and training resources across the Active and Reserve Components units, dependent upon both the criticality of the respective units’ mission to the Combatant Commanders’ operations plans, and the units’ own level of operational readiness. Until recently, its use in formal Pentagon discussions was frowned upon because it implied “haves” and “have-nots” in the Army, with the bulk of the “have-nots” being in the Guard and Reserve. But with the impact of declining budgets becoming more apparent, senior Army leadership is again uttering the term.

Some Reserve Component Soldiers have no interest in mobilizing every five years to serve a year of Active Duty or to deploy on a moment’s notice as an integrated part of the Army’s contingency force. State governors, at the same time, want a force that will remain in their states to respond to local threats and natural or manmade disasters, not subject to periodic call-ups

to federal Active Duty. The Army Reserve and the state Guards could be “tiered” creating an “operational reserve” and a “strategic reserve.” Soldier and collective training in the “strategic reserve” could be reduced to one week or so a year and equipment allocated to these units according to their attenuated missions. Unless there is a grave and prolonged attack on United States interests, these Guard or Reserve “strategic” units would only respond to more complex missions and overseas deployments after several months of post-mobilization training.

4. The Guard and Reserve units must do away with the one weekend a month, two weeks a year annual training regime that has characterized Reserve Components training for over half a century. Some innovative commanders have already done so without asking, by congregating the days already allocated for two or three months of weekend drills to generate six days of consecutive training for their Soldiers. A weekend, alone, does not provide the requisite time to rehearse skills that are the reason for the unit’s respective existence, what with Soldiers required to complete multiple administrative tasks, satisfy briefing requirements, eating, maintaining unit equipment, and grooming the local Reserve Center or Guard Armory. A period of either 21 days, 28 days, or optimally one month of sustained training at a major training facility coordinated and synchronized with the unit’s Active Duty counterpart unit will produce a training outcome

superior to twelve weekends of limited training opportunities. One day a month, muster calls, to satisfy administrative and medical tasks, can complete the balance of the training year without the necessity of further authorization by Congress of training dollars.

The counterargument has always been that our Nation’s employers will seize upon such extended training periods as a basis for not hiring the “Citizen Soldier”. Yet, these same employers put up nary a protest with respect to granting leave of up to twelve weeks, every 12 months to employees for family or medical reasons, under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act.²² The self-employed will either accept the challenge or quit the Reserve Components, although the long hoped for enactment of legislation to provide loss of income insurance for mobilized Reservists would go a long way toward retaining that talent of these entrepreneurs, professionals, farmers, tradesmen, and shopkeepers. Many of the younger Guard and Reserve Soldiers are students in post-secondary school institutions. These technical institutes, colleges and universities have shown that they can accommodate their students with various learning challenges through distance learning and schedule flexibility. At the risk of losing federal benefits, these scholastic institutions can make the adjustments necessary to support the new Reserve Component training regime.

The ancillary benefit of block training with Active Component units is that equipment for high-end conflict will not have to be maintained within every unit, but can be prepositioned at selected training sites to support the 28 days training bloc. Equipment necessary to accomplish state missions would not be concentrated.

5. Soldiers must be able to transition between the Guard, Reserve, and Active Component with relative ease. Whether this effort is called “Soldier for Life” or “Continuum of Service” there should not be institutional impediments to Reserve Soldiers matriculating to Active Duty and Active Duty Soldiers accepting part time service in the Reserve Components to facilitate raising a family or enhancing career opportunities. Pay and personnel systems must support this flexibility.

6. What follows from the above is that Reserve Component Soldiers must serve and command at both the officer and enlisted ranks across the Total Army, if the opportunity presents itself, to include Active Army battalions, brigades, and general officer command and senior staff positions, assuming these Reserve Components Soldiers possess the requisite credentials and comparative experience. Conversely, Active Component officers and non-commissioned officers should be able to serve, and as the case may be, command Reserve Components units with no adverse impact upon their upward progression in the Active Army. This initiative is not new, but without constant vigilance and enforcement of

this personnel policy by the civilian leadership of the Army, it will be forsaken, as it was in the past, because of inevitable Active – Reserve Component cultural differences and Human Resource managers’ concerns that career opportunities for Soldiers in their respective Components would be imperiled. The thought that a National Guard two-star infantry officer with successful brigade command time and Guard division command in combat, with requisite joint service and Army senior staff time in the Pentagon, could and should serve as the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, or an Army Reserve general officer serve as the Army G4, will be unsettling to many in the Active Component. But if the balance of the above initiatives are to work it requires senior leaders who not only “talk the talk” about the Reserve Components in the Total Army, but have served in both Active and Reserve Commands.

Conclusion

In the end, all discussion must focus on whether our Total Army is capable of preserving our national security and advancing this country’s interests whether through training engagements, security cooperation exercises with allies, or combat operations around the world. We are at a tipping point with respect to the need to formulate a strategy for the engagement and resourcing of the Reserve Components as the Nation faces an uncertain future in a period of challenged federal budgets.

As an Army we continue to honor the “Total Force Policy” more in celebratory speech and symbolic policy letters than action.²³ As a country, we have spent billions in supporting and maintaining the Reserve Components Soldiers and units.

Either, the nation has wasted this money on the Reserve Components, buying equipment such units will never use and paying for personnel and their training, which will be employed, at best, in the lower end of the spectrum of land warfare operations – training, homeland defense, and security cooperation events, because, as the Spartan King Leonidas asserted in the opening story line to this article, these Reserve Component units and their Soldiers will never be the equal of their Active Duty counterparts. Or, the Reserve Components have not been employed to their fullest capability even in these recent conflicts because of institutional bias on the part of the Active Army heightened by equal reluctance of the part of a portion of Reserve Component leadership to fully

integrate their units with the Active counterparts, to train cooperatively, to move out smartly when mobilized, and to facilitate access by the Active Army to this Reserve capability when needed.

The preferred conclusion is this, “If manned, equipped, trained, and employed to their full potential as an operational force through the vigorous implementation of Total Force integration proposals, the National Guard and Army Reserve can and will best serve our nation’s security interests.”

And let it be noted, that while Leonidas and his legendary full time 300 Spartans retarded the Persian invasion by a little over three days, thus giving the other Greek City States time to mobilize and prepare, it was the Athenian, Themistocles, a career politician and reserve military officer, commanding citizen reserve soldiers and sailors, who defeated Xerxes both at land and sea at Salamis a month later and repelled the invasion.

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